

CHAPTER 2.7.12.

AVIAN INFLUENZA

General Comment:

Many countries frequently prohibit the transit (trans-shipment) of poultry and poultry products through their territories even when the product originates from “disease free” countries, zones or compartments. For certain important Code Chapters, such as this one, it would be useful to have a statement to remind Member Countries to abide by the conditions outlined in Chapter 1.4.2 regarding animal health measures applicable during transit.

Specific Comments

Suggested language

Article 2.7.12.1.

1. For the purposes of this *Terrestrial Code*, avian influenza in its notifiable form (NAI) is defined as an infection of poultry caused by any influenza A virus of the H5 or H7 subtypes or by any AI virus with an intravenous pathogenicity index (IVPI) greater than 1.2 (or as an alternative at least 75% mortality) as described below. NAI viruses can be divided into highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza (HPNAI) and low pathogenicity notifiable avian influenza (LPNAI):
 - a) HPNAI viruses have an IVPI in 6-week-old chickens greater than 1.2 or, as an alternative, cause at least 75% mortality in 4-to 8-week-old chickens infected intravenously. H5 and H7 viruses which do not have an IVPI of greater than 1.2 or cause less than 75% mortality in an intravenous lethality test ~~should~~ must be sequenced to determine whether multiple basic amino acids are present at the cleavage site of the haemagglutinin molecule (HA0); if the amino acid motif is similar to that observed for other HPNAI isolates, the isolate being tested should be considered as HPNAI.

Comment/rationale: Substituting the word “should” for the word “must” makes this section consistent with the language found in Chapter 2.1.14, Section B.2.c) of the

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Manual for Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals. This change also stress the importance of conducting sequence testing , particularly on the H5 and H7 AI subtypes.

Suggested language

Article 2.7.12.11.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for eggs for human consumption

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the eggs come from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*.

If the laying hens were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.

Rationale/Comments: See rationale under Article 2.7.12.12 below.

Suggested language

Article 2.7.12.12.

When importing from a HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for eggs for human consumption

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the eggs:

1. come from a HPNAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*;
2. come from *establishments* in which there has been no evidence of NAI in the past 21 days;
3. have had their surfaces sanitised (in accordance with Article 3.4.1.7 or with other proven disinfectants approved for use in foods for human consumption) and are transported in new packing material.

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4. if the laying hens were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.

Rationale/Comments:

Item 3: While Article 3.4.1.7 of Appendix 3.4.1 offers the option of sanitizing shell eggs using other products besides formalin, we believe that the reference to this Article in this section could lead to confusion since it applies to the disinfection and fumigation “hatching eggs” where the use of formalin is offered as an option. In the United States shell eggs processed for human consumption are first cleaned of any adhering organic material using hot water and an appropriate washing compound and then rinsed with a chemical sanitizer.

Item 4: Article 2.7.12.12 (as well as Articles 2.7.12.11, 2.7.12.13, and 2.7.12.14) do not contain the vaccination language found in Articles 2.7.12.5-10, which deal with live poultry and hatching eggs. We assume the omission reflects a view that the language is unnecessary when dealing with eggs and egg products, and that is that antibodies could be present in the egg contents, but they would be antibodies that were a consequence of vaccination, and hence there would be *no* infection under the definition of that term in Article 2.7.12.1(4), so that the eggs or egg products would satisfy the requirement that there should have been “no evidence of NAI in the past 21 days.”

However, the United States is concerned that the absence of such vaccination language in these articles could be misconstrued as an implicit disapproval of the use of vaccination in laying flocks. Alternatively, misunderstandings could occur if the presence of antibodies were interpreted as “evidence of NAI” despite the clear language in Article 2.7.12.1(4). It is desirable to make it clear that vaccination does not create any obstacle to trade in eggs and egg products, since it has been well demonstrated that LPAI viruses are not transmitted in egg contents, cleaning and sanitizing will remove any virus from the shell, and all egg products are pasteurized at standard times and temperatures, inactivating any virus.

Suggested language

Article 2.7.12.13.

When importing from an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for egg products

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the egg products come from, and were processed in, an NAI free country, *zone* or *compartment*.

If the laying hens were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.

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Rationale/Comments: See rationale under Article 2.7.12.12

Suggested language

Article 2.7.12.14.

Regardless of the NAI status of the country, *zone* or *compartment* of origin, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for egg products

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the egg products:

1. are derived from eggs which meet the requirements of Articles 2.7.12.9., 2.7.12.10., 2.7.12.11., or 2.7.12.12.; or
2. were processed to ensure the destruction of NAI virus (under study), and the necessary precautions were taken after processing to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of NAI virus.
3. if the laying hens were vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.

Rationale/Comments:

See rationale under Article 2.7.12.12

Article 2.7.12.20

...

for meat products of poultry

1. ...
2. the *commodity* has been processed to ensure destruction of the NAI virus (~~under study~~)

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3. the necessary precautions were taken to avoid contact of the *commodity* with any source of the NAI virus
4. if the flock (parent/layer/commercial as the case may be) was vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.”

Rationale/Comment

Item 2: Perhaps some clarification can be made on acceptable processing methods such as dry heat, steaming, boiling, frying, or other common methods of processing.

Item 4: See rationale provided under Article 2.7.12.12.

Other Comments:

Articles 2.7.12.15 through 2.7.12.20 regarding the import measures for poultry semen, semen of birds other than poultry, fresh meat of poultry, and meat products of poultry, the same rationale applies as described in the rationale for Article 2.7.12.12, and so, we recommend that the vaccination statement be added to each of these articles.

“if the flock (parent/layer/commercial as the case may be) was vaccinated, vaccination was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3.8.9, and the relevant information is attached.”